

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, June 19, 1898, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Sunday, June 19th., 1898. My dear Alec:

I feel that I have treated you shabbily lately especially when you have been sending me such nice long letters, but I have been so very tired each night that I have put off writing until next day, for three days now. Please forgive me and I will try to do better in future. I will write Miss Rogers to ask if I may send you a copy of Papa's letter with that piece about the principalship, but it is just that piece that she marked as not to be used.

I have come to the conclusion that you were right about Daisy's going South, though I have not heard of anyone on that expedition suffering in any way so far. The difference between your view and mine was that I did not believe Daisy would suffer from the heat, that it would not be much if any greater than the heat here.

Thank you, and thank you again for taking the "crushed fly"! Dr. Sowers did give me other pills — small ones — for you to take every day — but I feared to risk the success of my appeal by asking too much of you. He wanted you to take Hungary water every day so as to have a great and thorough clearance. I told him that you always did have that but still he seemed to think you should have more. I should think that it might be that although you let off a good deal still too much remained, which would account for the turns of looseness you have sometimes. Anyway I am sure you have not been in a healthy condition for a long time, that the supply and waste have not been properly balanced. I am so anxious that you should use every means for putting yourself in good condition to come down if come you must. But I feel less than ever the need of your running any risk and Dr. Gordon either since reading John Williams' report to the Bd. of Education. When old Hartford has come to announce as its great principle in education "Speech speech speech" and to say

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that 2 it will have an oral department. I can't see that the condition of the Oral cause can be so very critical.

I have been working very hard the last few days on a preface. Mamma and I want to reprint with some editorial changes and comment Papa's paper on "Signs or Articulation" with some extracts from his testimony before the Committee and his paper on the 25th. Anniversary of Clarke, for free distribution among members of the N.E.A. We got the idea from Dr. Hamlin. He asked me one day a short time ago if you did not use signs in talking to me and said further that he had a "very friendly feeling towards the language of signs as it would make its possession able to make himself understood the world over"! That Dr. Hamlin, Papa's friend and Dr. Gallaudet's, could have such a hazy knowledge of what the sign language was, made me feel how little other people must know. Coming across Papa's pamphlet soon after I could not see why a great deal that he said there was not true now, and while some of it was antiquated still enough remained with what Papa said in his testimony and in his address before Clarke to make a readable and instructive pamphlet which might well supplement the work and addresses of the teachers, — Franklin School. It would be taken home by the visitors as a souvenir of their visit and read and distributed far over the country, and may do a great work.

I have been struggling so with that preface, working at it steadily from ten or eleven in the morning to seven in the evening sometimes. It has been very hard work for I not only wanted to write well but to be sure of every statement I made. For this purpose I have borrowed almost a cart load of books from the Volta Bureau. Reports of the American Asylum of Clarke. Histories of the Institutions of 3 Gallaudet College, your statistics — Reports of Bds. of Charities, of Education, and I know not what else. I think after several abortive attempts I have today succeeded in writing a preface for every word of which I have text and reference. Yet it does not look like anything at all, and is the sum of many failures which were failures because I could not prove my authority. I will send you a copy tomorrow and Mamma says will you please telegraph if you think it is unobjectionable. You see we have little time now. I think I have been a fortnight working at the thing. I do so

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hope you will not think it very bad because I have really put my utmost efforts into it and like poor old Dr. Turner I wouldn't like to go to my grave thinking that what I had worked so hard over was all wrong, a mistake and useless.

Who do you think has been here today? Marie Duncan of Paris! She is now Mrs. Harrison of New York. She married the hairless man we went to Fountainsbleau with four weeks ago, and seems very happy. I am very glad for her because he looks like a thoroughly good and cheerful man and will I am sure take good care of her.

I hope you are very nice to Mrs. Kennan. I am sure she needs kindness now,

Lovingly, ever yours, Mabel.